This session will focus on the City of Tacoma’s South Downtown Subarea Plan and associated “Non-Project” SEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
Background

- UWT Campus
- Regional Growth Center
- PSRC Growing Transit Communities
- HUD Grant
- One of 3 Subareas in Downtown Tacoma

South Downtown Subarea and its districts
University of Washington Tacoma

- Current Student Population: 4,000
- Staff: 900
- Projected 2030 Student Population: 14,000
2030 City-wide Targets:
• 60,000 new jobs
• 70,000 new people

Based on growth allocations from PSRC and Pierce County
The Growing Transit Communities Partnership was funded by a three-year grant from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Three main goals:

- Attract more of the region’s residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit
- Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit
- Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities

The South Downtown Plan and EIS are one of three demonstration projects.
The four Sound Transit LINK station areas located in South Downtown are all designated as the “Stimulate Demand” type.

The high priority strategy categories associated with the “Stimulate Demand” type are:

- Promote economic development to retain and expand job base
- Long-Range capital facilities plan with phased infrastructure and public realm investments
- Affordable housing assessment and preservation
- Community needs assessment and targeted investments
• U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program

• Supports locally-led collaborative efforts to determine how best to target housing, economic and workforce development, and infrastructure investments to create more jobs and regional economic activity

• Six livability principles

• To date HUD has awarded over $165 million to 74 regional grantees in 44 states and helping to improve the lives of approximately 112 million people.
3 Downtown Tacoma Subareas

- North Downtown
- South Downtown
- Hilltop (MLK)
Previous Planning Efforts
About the Project

- Subarea Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Planning Target: 30 million sq. ft. of new development
• Identify Necessary Utility Improvements
  • Water, sewer, stormwater, telecommunications, etc.

• Plan for Open Space
  • Prairie Line Trail, potential pocket & destination parks, Foss Waterway Park, etc.

• Prioritize Transportation Investments
  • Light rail, bus, train, parking, pedestrian, bike, roadway improvements, etc.
• Maintain basic eligibility for federal, state, and regional transportation funding

• Accelerate public investment in downtown through a series of coordinated actions, e.g. utility/multi-model street upgrades and Freighthouse Square-area upgrades

• Gain a competitive advantage for new private and public sector investment through a streamlined project approval process, more flexible zoning, and public/private partnerships
Stakeholder Input & Review

Data Collection & Existing Conditions Review

Establish Draft Goals and Policy Framework

Draft Subarea Plan & EIS

Council Approval

- Stakeholder Input & Review: September 2011 – Spring 2013
- Data Collection & Existing Conditions Review: Spring - Winter 2011
- Establish Draft Goals and Policy Framework: Spring 2011 - Fall 2012
- Draft Subarea Plan & EIS: Spring 2012 - Fall 2013
- Council Approval: December 2013
• “Transit-Infill Review” Upfront SEPA

• The City proceeded under the “Planned Action” and “Infill Exemption” Upfront SEPA forms recognizing that RCW 43.21C.420(5)(a) and (b) (“Transit-Infill Review”) include a sunset provision.
Non-Project EIS

• Not subject to SEPA-based appeals at project level

• Jointly sponsored by the City of Tacoma and the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) with the City of Tacoma acting as Lead Agency

• A non-project document as it addresses a 600-acre area of South Downtown Tacoma and presents a cumulative impact analysis for the entire subarea

• Transit Infill Review

• No project/EIS consistency test

• Provides certainty and predictability to developers and investors

• Streamlines permit review process
Transit-infill review requires extensive mailed notice and upfront public participation provisions.

The outreach efforts included providing project updates and overviews of the Plan and EIS to neighborhood councils, interested parties, monthly meetings with the Steering Committee, quarterly meetings with a Council-resolution-formed Working Group, periodic stakeholder meetings, and business group outreach.

Participants were encouraged to voice concerns, provide suggestions, and discuss particular issues throughout the entire process.
Catalyst Projects

- UWT Campus Master Plan Approval
- Amtrak Station Relocation
- Pierce Transit Site Redevelopment
- Prairie Line Trail
- The Henry
• The City pre-approved the entire UWT Campus Master Plan

• UWT campus was established in 1990 and the UWT campus has undergone an extraordinary transformation earning numerous awards for the adaptive reuse of several century-old, brick railroad-era structures into modern classroom facilities

• UWT’s plans for continued expansion will be a major economic driver for the area.
Amtrak Station Relocation

- Amtrak station is being relocated to Freighthouse Square from its current location on Puyallup Avenue.

- The relocation is part of the Point Defiance Bypass Project which will reroute passenger trains to an existing rail line along the west side of Interstate 5 through south Tacoma, Lakewood, and DuPont.

- The Project will allow two more runs from Tacoma to Portland, create a faster route and more reliable service, as well as free up the Point Defiance tracks for freight-only traffic.

- A Citizen Advisory Group was formed in February 2013 to help with the planning process of the relocation of Amtrak Station.

- The Citizen Advisory Group recommended that the Amtrak station relocation be sited at the east end of Freighthouse Square.
Pierce Transit Site Redevelopment

- Site owned by Pierce Transit across from Freighthouse Square on East 25th St.

- A market study done by Kidder Mathews found that there is a market for housing in this area, there is currently virtually no housing in the Dome District.

- The proposed building would have 78-88 dwelling units, 7500 sq. ft. of street-level retail, 4,000 sq. ft. of amenities, and 7,000 sq. ft. of open space.

- 6 modes of transportation available for residents and visitors.
Map of the Pierce Transit Site
• Located ½ block from 6.4 acre catalyst site at 21st Street and Jefferson Avenue

• The project would connect the Foss Waterway, downtown destinations and regional bicycle and pedestrian networks via a safe, comfortable and accessible multi-use pathway.

• Trail corridor and linear park will act as economic catalyst and important community resource

• UWT to complete portion running through the campus
Prairie Line Trail Design Concept

Design concepts for the Prairie Line Trail through the UWT Campus
• Located between Dock St. and the Thea Foss Waterway on the north side of the S. 21st St Bridge

• 161-unit mixed-use building

• Rooftop dining, private dog park, views of Mt. Rainier and the Foss, retail space, and public park space.

• $32 million building

• Developed by the same group that built the first major building on the Foss: Thea’s Landing
Thank you

Contact Us:
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